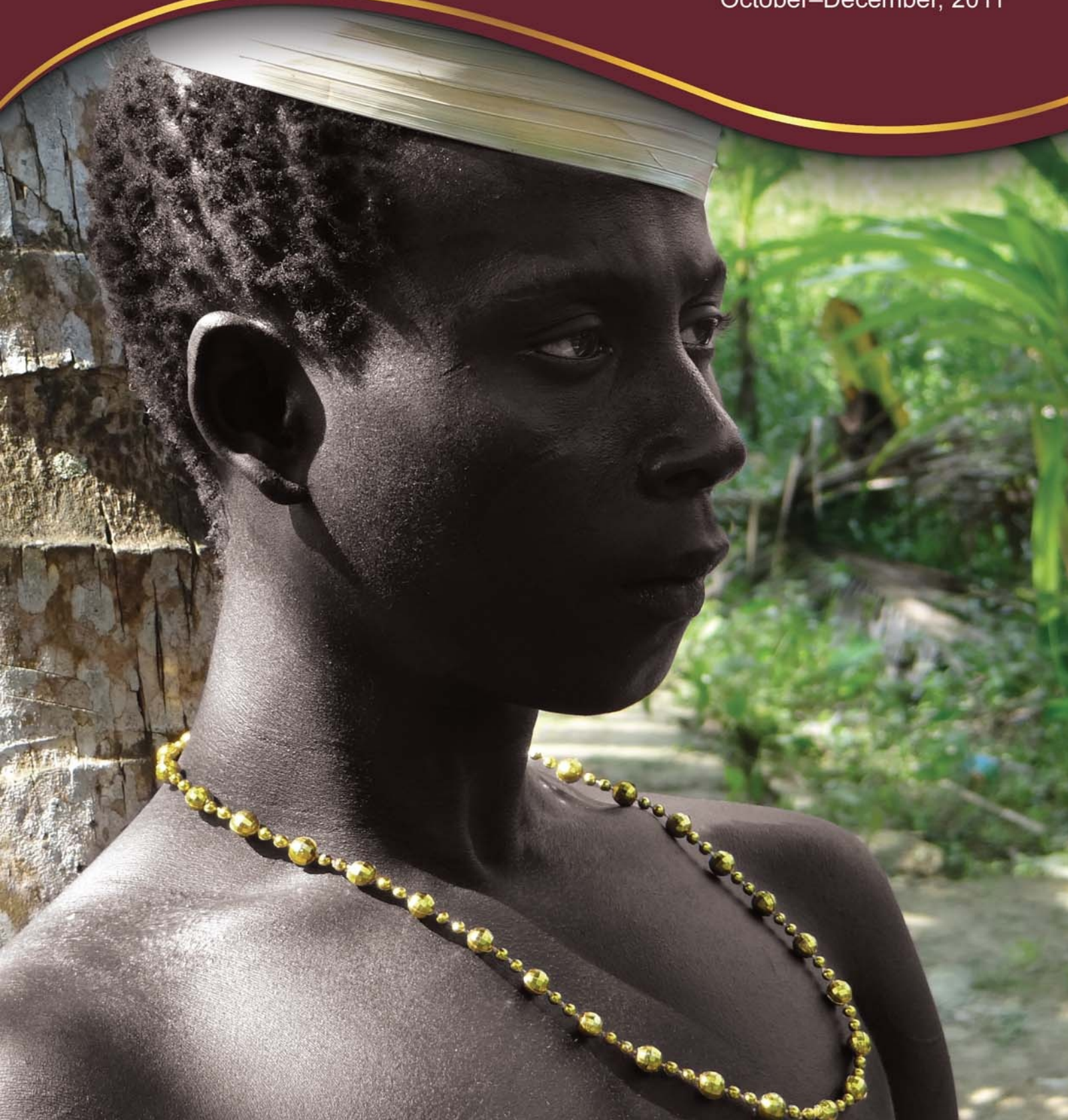
Anthropological Survey of India

NEWSLETTER

October–December, 2011



Shri Jawhar Sircar flanked by Prof. K. K. Misra on his right and on the left by Prof. A. K. Danda, during the National Advisory Committee Meeting of the Anthropological Survey of India in Kolkata on 1st October, 2011

EDITORIAL

When we, the fraternity of Anthropological Survey of India, bid farewell to 2011 and welcome 2012 as another year of happening, we did introspect our accomplishments, and this Newsletter is the testimony of what we could achieve in the last quarter of the last year. It is immensely gratifying for me that my colleagues in the Survey from all cadres, all disciplines and all Centres contributed their mite to our cherished objectives of anthropological research, documentation and dissemination of research results, for which they deserve all our appreciation. We are nearing completion of the Social Impact Assessment (SIA) Module after rigorous field testing. We also ventured into new studies on areas undergoing gruelling social tensions. Our strength has been our multi-disciplinary research approach to understand various social issues that cannot be understood within the confines of a single disciplinary boundary. The studies in Rajarhat, Nandigram, Singur and Lalgarh during the quarter under report have opened up new challenges for us to understand the dynamics of bio-cultural formations and changes from a holistic perspective. All our Regional Centres have shown their impressive vibrancy in research, documentation and publication, besides engaging themselves in other activities, such as, celebrating Vigilance Awareness Week, Hindi Pakhwada, etc. Given the present trend, I am confident that we can achieve still more in coming quarters and present them before you.

I wish all of you a prosperous and eventful 2012.

Prof. Kamal K. Misra
Director

RESEARCH ROUNDUP

India is on the path of development for quite some time and is poised to be a major player in the global economy in the coming decades. While the execution of development projects is continued at a faster pace, they have unleashed plethora of public and political sensitivities about the possible socio-economic and cultural impact of such projects on the people at large and particularly on those who are directly affected by such projects. India has also been a witness to increased eruption of public grievances, especially from the marginalized and tribal communities, which are most affected by the processes of development and at times lack of development.

Anthropological Survey of India, the premier organization for Anthropological research could not remain indifferent to the serious concerns of the people of India. So, with the encouragement of Shri Jawhar Sircar, Union Secretary for the Ministry of Culture and Chairman of the National Advisory Committee, Anthropological Survey of India, we prepared a SIA (Social Impact Assessment) Manual to guide all those who are seriously concerned with SIA studies and also engaged ourselves in such studies in a major way.

The SIA Manual has been pre-tested and the outcome has largely been satisfactory. The second phase of field work in the mining area (in Sundergarh district, Odisha) of Posco Steel Project has just been completed, while the field study of the Thermal Power Project in Bara and Karchhhan tehsils of Allahabad district is underway.

Taking cognizance of the social unrest emanating either due to development initiatives or lack of it, four studies have recently been initiated in Singur, Nandigram, Lalgarh and Rajarhat areas to study the issues at hand, and the field work for the first three locations has been completed while the Rajarhat work continues. The studies are expected to find reasons for the social unrest as well as to suggest pragmatic solutions.

Anthropological Study of Urbanization at New Town, Rajarhat

Since 1990s, investment in the residential and infrastructural development of the industrial facilities of Rajarhat - Gopalpur area of North 24 Parganas of West Bengal was initiated. The Government has made a master plan of a township for the area which would at least be three times bigger than the neighbouring Salt Lake City. Since then, the New Town of Rajarhat became a fast growing planned city. The area has a large coverage of cultivable land and water bodies under the 'Eastern Kolkata Wetland'. Anthropological Survey of India has initiated a study of the process of urbanization in this satellite township of Kolkata with a multi-disciplinary team of anthropologists, ecologists, linguists and psychologists. Keeping the growth of such a mammoth city in view, the objectives of the study include understanding economic change in terms of occupational mobility, adjustment of people with urbanization, to assess changes in socio-cultural and economic horizons, social situation in terms of education, family,cultural behaviour in terms of maintaining norms, values and beliefs, people's perception of growing urbanization and to assess the pattern of interaction across the groups, etc. An affected village, Ghuni has already been studied while the field work still continues to study other villages.

Rajarhat in the making across the agricultural field

Tata Motors site amidst the agricultural field

Land Acquisition and Emerging Issues: An Anthropological study of Singur

A part of the well irrigated and multi-cropped agricultural land in Singur of Hooghly district was acquired by the Government for a Tata Motors project. Some farmers have objected to the land acquisition policy and its transformation. The disaffection led to physical torture, violence, damage and loss to property and economy. Five villages were directly and one village was partially affected in the project area. A multi-disciplinary team of researchers has done extensive field work at micro level in Singur to study the social impact of land acquisition on the socio-economic, cultural and psychological aspects of the people of Singur area.

Socio-economic Profile among the Marginalised Ethnic groups in and around Lalgarh, West Bengal

A multi-disciplinary team of Anthropological Survey of India has carried out an extensive field investigation in and around Lalgarh - an area of alleged extremist influence in the Junglemahal of Paschim Medinipur, West Bengal to understand reasons behind the pervasive social unrest. The investigations centred on socio-cultural profile, sustainable development of the peasants who are victims of political turmoil in the villages of Netai, Jhitka and Bhumij Dhansola. The level and degree of polarisation in all spheres of 'life and action' was marked while the difference between the 'haves' and 'have-nots' is getting increased and the quality and investment on Man in the studied area is remarkably poor.

Transportation of harvested paddy at Netai village, Lalgarh

Emerging Bio-cultural and Ecological Issues of Nandigram: An Anthropological Perspective

Nandigram, a rural area in the Haldia subdivision of Purba Medinipur district of West Bengal, opposite the industrial city of Haldia was in news when the movement of villagers under the banner of the BUPC, *Bhumi Uchhed Pratirodh Committee* (i.e., Land Eviction Resistance Committee) protesting against the move to set up a chemical hub in Nandigram under the Special Economic Zone (SEZ). The protest met with violence on thousands of peaceful, unarmed villagers including hundreds of women and children, sometime in 2007. A multi-disciplinary team from the Anthropological Survey of India has carried out an intensive field investigation of the affected areas of Nandigram in order to understand the emerging issues of people's unrest from bio-cultural and ecological points of view. The broad objectives of the study include understanding the general socio-economic and health profile, to ascertain the availability of local resources and their utilization, to know the ethnic composition and inter-community relationships, to assess people's perception of various developmental programmes, etc. Health profile of 500 pre-school children, below five years, was also surveyed and 600 adolescent boys and girls were screened for the β -Thalassaemia from the Nandigram, Sonachura, Saudhkhali, Gangrachar, Garchakraberia and Kalicharanpur villages.

Surveying health profile of pre-school children in Nandigram area

Social Impact Assessment in the Posco Project Area

Field investigations were undertaken by a team of researchers as part of SIA in the forest villages of three gram panchayats within the jurisdiction of Lahunipara block of Sundargarh district, falling within the proposed area of POSCO project for meeting the iron ore requirements of the steel project in the Khandadhar hill ranges of Odisha. Main objective of the study was to find out the impact of mining operations on the traditional livelihood patterns of Paudi Bhuiyan and other tribal as well as non-tribal communities. The study reflected a growing protest and discomfort among the inhabitants who apprehend loss of cultural elements and their associated values, non timber forest produce, loss of agricultural land owing to the shifting hill lands and displacement due to the project.

Market place in the Posco project area

Andaman and Nicobar Islands

Six personnel of the Andaman and Nicobar Regional Centre have initiated

Somewhere in the Great Nicobar Islands

intensive field work in November, 2011 to study the impact of recent developments on Jarawa society and culture, aimed at to generate data, useful for both academia and the administration. This has become necessary as there was little information on the subject.

On a request from the Andaman & Nicobar administration, a team of experts, including two members from the Anthropological Survey of India, examined the possibility of repairing and reopening the East West Road in Great Nicobar Islands, which mostly passes through the Shompen territory. Some members of the team have also visited the Great Nicobar islands for the purpose. A report has been submitted to the Chief Secretary, A & N administration.

Nokrek Biosphere Reserve (NBR) forested region is the core area of NBR photographed from Darbokgre village, a buffer village of NBR

Biosphere Reserve Study

Under the National Project 'Man and Environment', the second phase of field work for the Nokrek Biosphere Reserve (NBR) was carried out in November, 2011. All together 12 buffer villages were studied. The main objective of the study was to find out the environmental ethos embedded in the border matrix of socio-cultural and economic practices. In addition, data related to allied activities like tourism was also collected against the backdrop that how it is going to better the local economy and the scope of tourism in NBR.

DNA Polymorphism Studies among the Contemporary Indian Populations

Data and blood samples have been collected from six communities, Garhwali Brahman & Rajput (Uttarakhand), Meena and Gadia (Rajasthan), Mizo (Mizoram) and Kani (Kerala). Laboratory analysis is underway.

Gadia lohar couple engaged in blacksmithy

Dr. B. Francis Kulirani, SA (C), Mysore, delivering the Key note address in the Nationlal Seminar at Guwahati on 11 Nov 2011

Dr. Priyanka Singh (PDF) of NWRC, Dehradun being awarded first prize by Prof. Robert Richardson (USA), 1996 Nobel Laureate in Physics, in poster presentation during 4th Science Conclave held at the Indian Institute of Information Technology, Allahabad

Dr. Shampa Gangopadhyay of CRC, Nagpur delivering a lecture 'Anthropometry : New vision in Anatomical Research' during the CME, Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Medical Sciences, Sevagram, Maharashtra

Visit of the school children to the exhibtion on Human Origins, Genome & People of India mounted in the ZAM, SRC Mysore

EVENTS

Shri Jawhar Sircar Chairman, National Advisory Committee of the Anthropological Survey of India speaking in the course of NAC Meeting

National Advisory Committee Meeting

National Advisory Committee of the Anthropological Survey of India met on the 1st of October. The meeting began with the welcome address by the Director, Prof. K. K. Misra, and his appraisal of the significance of the meeting.

Shri Jawhar Sircar, Secretary, Ministry of Culture and Chairman of the National Advisory Committee, in his opening speech talked of some important aspects of the present day Indian society like 'fusion of communities' and 'Indianisation of India', where subtle direction of social-cultural change could be felt. He emphasized on how Anthropology has the potential to study human life from the perspective of the people. He has stressed upon taking up result oriented Anthropological research that could meaningfully contribute to the society.

Prof. Misra informed Hon'ble members of the Committee that most of the actionable points of the minutes of the previous meeting were fulfilled and made a presentation of the research proposals and other programmes for the 12th Five Year Plan. After a detailed discussion, the house unanimously gave its consent for all the project proposals of the 12th Plan.

Orientation Course

A five day Orientation Course was organized for Research Associates (Cultural) of the Anthropological Survey of India, from 17th October to 21st October, under the aegis of the International School of Anthropology at Kolkata.

Prof. K. K. Misra, Director, Anthropological Survey of India delivering a lecture during the Orientation Course for the Research Associates

Vigilance Awareness Week

Vigilance Awareness Week was observed in the Anthropological Survey of India Head Office and its Regional Centres from 31st October to 5th November. During the Vigilance week, a "Multi Disciplinary Interactive Session" was organized at Head Office, Kolkata in which students of La Martiniere for Girls School have participated on 2nd November.

Promotion and Appointments

On a departmental promotion, Dr. Suresh Patil, SA (Cultural) has been promoted as a Deputy Director to join the Central Regional Centre on 24th October. On direct recruitment, two Deputy Directors (Cultural), Dr. M. Sasi Kumar and Dr. C. R. Sathyanarayanan have joined Andaman & Nicober Regional Centre and Southern Regional Centre on 29th December and 28th November respectively.

During the Viglilence Awareness week at the Head Office, Kolkata

An interactive session with the students of the Lamartiniere for Girls, Kolkata during the course of the Vigilence Awareness Week at the Head Office, Kolkata

LATEST PUBLICATIONS

Publictions from Anthropological Survey of India can be had from the Publication & Distribution Section

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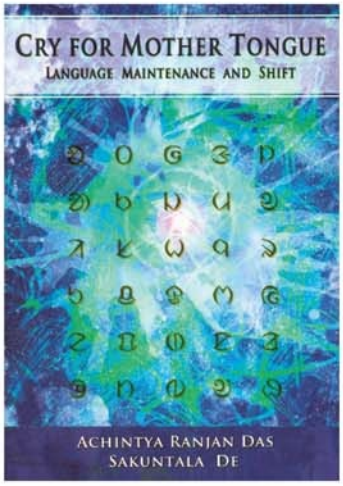
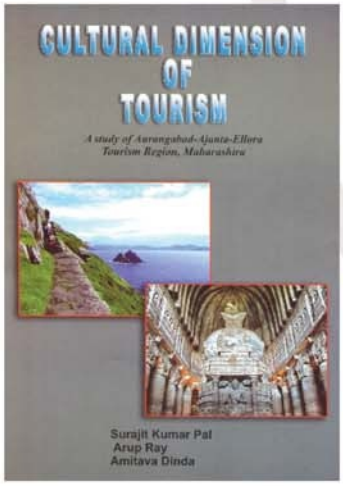


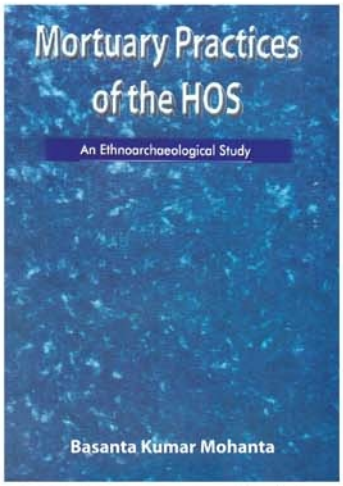
A study of language maintenance and shift among the Munda of Ranchi, Singpho of Arunachal Pradesh, Gond of Nagpur, Oraon of Ranchi & Lohardaga and Santal of Birbhum

₹ 520/-



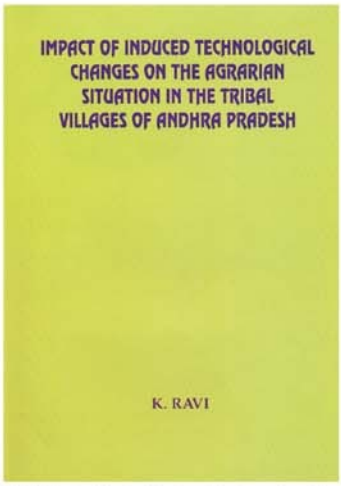
Study of an important tourist circuit Aurangabad-Ajanta-Ellora in the Marathwada region of Maharashtra, this book details the cultural dimensions which are often ignored in formulating policies

₹ 850/-



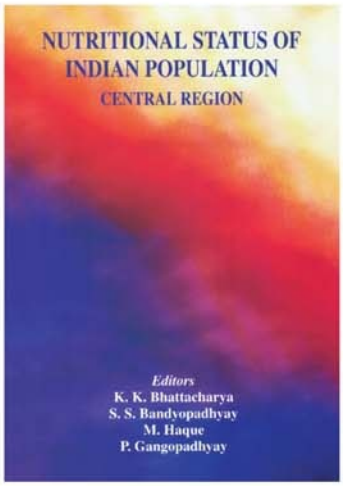
A study of mortuary practices of the Ho in an ethno-archaeological perspective, this volume is an important contribution for understanding the culture and society in the way of persistence and change of customs

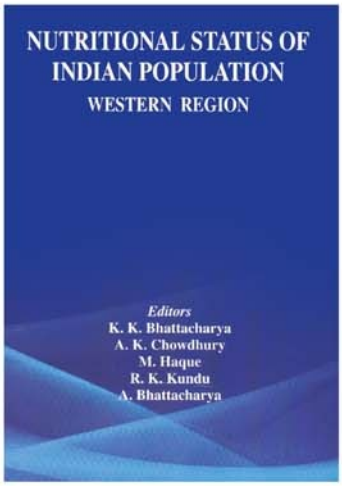
₹ 750/-



A holistic study in the Eastern Ghats emphasizing the adaptive strategy of induced technological development on the agrarian situation and the corresponding changes in the attitudes, values, beliefs and world view of the Bagatha

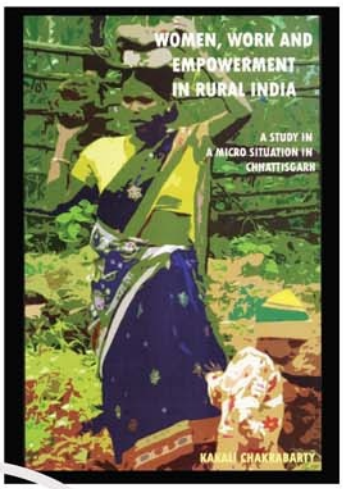
₹ 730/-





An outcome of a National project, covering 122 populations across 61 locations of different meeting points of every odd degree latitude and longitude. The series, in seven volumes, an invaluable guide to the researchers on diet and nutrition, community health workers, planners, anthropologists and social scientists

₹ 1350/- **₹ 1095/-**



A village study of Chhattisgarh highlighting the social status, economic freedom and obligations of the working women in the unorganized sector

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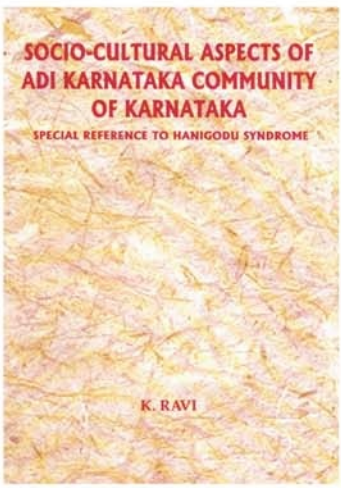

An exploration of ethnographic and epidemiological aspects of the Adi Karnataka with special reference to Handigodu syndrome

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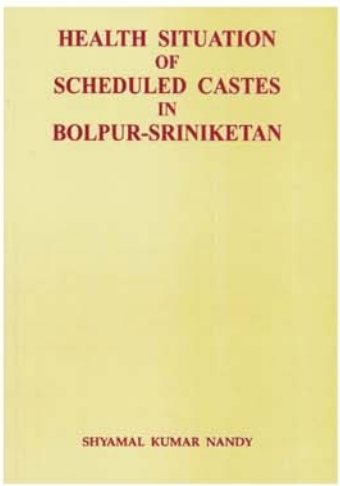
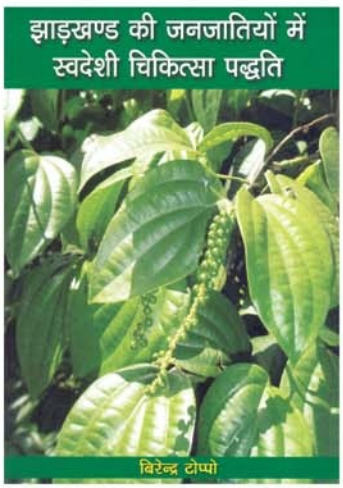


A holistic study of health situation highlighting cultural elements and their change in the broader Medical Anthropology of a micro-situation

₹ 515/-



An important contribution to the indigenous health practices genre, detailing the role of the medicine men and the cultural practices of healing

₹ 460/-

Hindi Karyashala
ERC, Kolkata
& NWRC, Deradun

Farewell

Front Cover: A Jarawa boy from Andaman & Nicobar Islands

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